

CULTURAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



FOREWORD

There is so much to celebrate in what the teams and services across Cultural Services have delivered and achieved in 2022/23. The impact of the pandemic has been put firmly behind us whilst some of the positives of having to work in different ways and having to develop our digital offers have been retained.

Across Cultural Services we have once again welcomed a lot of new staff who have brought excellent transferable skills with them and the key ingredients of wanting to work with people and deliver services that make a difference to people's everyday lives.

Across Cultural Services we work with a wide range of funders, partners, stakeholders, volunteers, and friends to support the work we do, benefiting communities across the county. We have had some real success in bringing external funding into a number of our teams and we aim to build on that success in 2023/24. External funding can support those developments and projects that have real impact but would not otherwise be able to be funded.

Each time we put together our annual report we can see the breadth and variety of what makes up the Cultural Services family. We are always looking at how the different teams and services can work together and collaborate as we get more impact when we can do that.

For 2023/24 we have decided that our top 3 priorities will be sustaining our services (making sure key offers are available and accessible), audience development (maintaining and developing our reach) and continuing to develop the quality of our services (including digital provision and support). All our objectives across the service plans of our services and teams will link into one or more of these priorities.

Steve Lloyd
Interim Head of Cultural Services
Lancashire County Council



LANCASHIRE LIBRARIES

Lancashire has 64 static libraries serving a population of circa 1.2 million citizens.

The Harris library, run by Preston City Council on our behalf, is currently closed for major refurbishment, but a temporary space is delivering a much-valued service. We are delighted to report that the last year has seen a gradual return to normal delivery.

In 2022 – 23

- We issued **3,218,843** books - an overall increase of **16%** compared with last year
- **2,328,906** people visited our libraries, an overall increase of **47%** compared with last year.
- We delivered **25,312** events to reflect our diverse communities and to address our core offers of Reading, Health and Wellbeing, Information and Digital and Culture and Creativity
- **2,014,414** e-downloads were issued - this includes eBooks, eAudiobooks, newspapers and magazines
- Public computer sessions **263,246**

From April to December, we hosted 20 cultural events with our external partners, 'Culturapedia', and delivered 18 Fun Palaces in October. We worked closely with our Public Health colleagues and offered Covid vaccinations in 12 of our libraries in areas of low take-up and have also provided comprehensive health checks in each geographical district.

We support children and young people to enjoy a love of reading for pleasure, improve their literacy skills and to help them perform better in school through our year-round reading schemes.

- **11,120** visits made by Library Explorers (0-5yrs)
- **12,730** books read by Lancashire Reading Trail participants (5-12yrs)
- **192** children aged 5-12 receiving a signed book prize
- **6,374** summer reading programme participants (5-12yrs)
- **1,484** winter reading scheme (newly trialled) participants (5-12yrs)
- **900+** total reads of our Lancashire Book of the Year 2022 shortlisted titles by judges aged 13-15



We work with national bodies including Libraries Connected with the universal offers being a key part of our service. We worked with colleagues from our refugee integration team, cultural development team, local City of Sanctuary partners and the national Libraries of Sanctuary awarding body to support our application for all Lancashire libraries to be credited with Libraries of Sanctuary status. A comprehensive action plan was submitted and the appraising panel “unanimously agreed that Lancashire Libraries deserved a sanctuary award in recognition of your amazing efforts to support sanctuary seekers and raise awareness around the country about forced migration”.

Our libraries have supported the corporate Cost of Living campaign by offering advice sessions and by signposting citizens enquiring about support with fuel, food and energy bills. Alongside this, from November to April, our libraries became “Warm and Welcome” spaces. We provided complimentary warm drinks, free charging points to enable citizens to work or study from our libraries, and a selection of jigsaws and games were available for those interested.

To support our workforce development programme, we reintroduced face to face forums for frontline staff, providing the opportunity for collaboration, engagement and opportunities to upskill.

“The library is a lifeline, offering warmth, wifi and companionship”
Library customer

“The library has been such a great help in giving us somewhere to keep warm and get a hot drink”
Library customer





HOME LIBRARY SERVICE (HLS)

The Home Library Service (HLS) delivers books and more to customers who can't get to the library. Our staff choose a selection of books, audio books, films and music which volunteers deliver, providing not just the items but a friendly face, a chance to chat and social interaction.

In 2022 – 23

As well as the core business of delivering items to customers we've also delivered engaging material for World Book Day and the Queen's Jubilee. We hope to continue extending such initiatives to our home library customers in the future.

HLS has been promoted via local pharmacies in the Lancaster area in a pilot to hopefully reach potential customers who could benefit from the service. We have also extended the warm and welcome offer to our HLS customers by sending out self-care packs provided by LCC Public Health, including hats, gloves, blankets and useful information.



“Each and every one of them said how marvellous it was to have books picked for them and delivered to their home.” Home Library Service Volunteer.

“Aside from the amazing stuff you do for my mum, the work you all do in the library on a larger scale, is incredibly important and very much appreciated. We're lucky to have a local library and such a great team staffing it! Definitely something I don't take for granted.” Son of HLS customer

“I love to read, but struggle to get to the library, so I'm thrilled to be able to use the Home Library Service” HLS customer



MOBILE LIBRARIES

Our five Mobile Library vans aptly named The Borrowers, Chitty Chitty Book Book, the Hardbacks of Notre Van, Great Transportations, Vroom with a View and Ride and Prejudice make sure people who do not live close to a public library in Lancashire can still access our great service.

Based across the county they cover routes on a three-weekly basis. Covering over **700** stops the Mobiles provide customers with access to a wide variety of stock including books and audio books which are changed regularly.

Customers can also order items and Mobile Library Officers promote our Digital offers giving guidance and support to customers on Borrowbox, Libby and PressReader apps, and also signpost customers to the Digital Library. They promote initiatives such as World Book Day with displays, activities and information.

“The mobile library visit is the only time I see my neighbours, get news about the community, meet new people and have a laugh and a chat.” Mobile library customer

“It is a place where I can ask for help finding information, they’ll point me in the right direction.”
Mobile library customer

PRISON LIBRARIES

We have five prison libraries across Lancashire delivering a library service to the prison community. The prisons have differing numbers of prisoners, security levels and needs. This year has seen the prisons move out of lockdown and start to offer library services within the library. Prison Reading groups, Storybook Dads, Bedtime Stories, Raising Readers, Reading Ahead, Author Visits and Shannon Trust are just some of the many initiatives we provide.

In 2022 – 23

We have provided a welcoming environment within our Prison Libraries to support the provision for staff and prisoners to access a variety of stock, have digital access, legal access and offer engaging material like jigsaws, games, colouring resources and puzzles.

The prison libraries employ prison library orderlies which are specialist roles for trusted prisoners who are trained to use the computer system, shelve, serve customers and promote the library.

Library staff provide extra initiatives to engage the prisoners, help with learning and education, develop skills, help connect with families and help with reducing reoffending.



MUSEUMS

Our museums enable people to explore the history of Lancashire.

We operate 6 public museums and attractions, plus our headquarters site at Stanley Street in Preston.

These include Judges' Lodgings in Lancaster, Queen Street Mill in Burnley, Helmshore Mills in Rossendale, Lancaster Castle Shire Hall, Gawthorpe Hall in Padiham and Clitheroe Castle Museum on behalf of Ribble Valley Borough Council.

In 2022 – 23

We attracted **115,803** people to our museums and heritage tours and **12,639** school visits attending sessions by our Heritage Learning Team or museum site teams. We also had **105,745** digital visitors to our website. **45** staff completed the Carbon Literacy in Museums training.

“Kids in Museums” have delivered **2** training sessions to museum teams to inform the development of our offer to families. We created **4** new temporary exhibitions at our sites, and Queen Street Mill and Helmshore Mills opened their cafes over the winter as community cafes one day a week.



CONSERVATION AND COLLECTION TEAM

The Conservation and Collection Team undertake the specialist curatorial, conservation and technical support for museums, colleagues in Cultural Services and the public. We interpret and care for museum collections and heritage to make it as accessible as possible to our communities. We upskill museum staff, heritage professionals and the public in collection care and preservation.

In 2022 – 23

Phase 1 of the major conservation project: Rochdale - Your Townhall Reborn was completed and we are 60% through phase 2, with the final phase running to 2025. The collaborative work with The National Trust to develop a sustainable future for the mill museums at Helmshore and Queen Street Mill was completed in the autumn.

We continue to build on the joint work and interpretation around collections with the National Trust by developing future joint grant applications.

In September in collaboration with Borough Councils we collected examples of the people's tributes to the Queen from the many memorials which appeared across Lancashire. These will be preserved in the Lancashire Archives for future generations. In December the Lancashire Conservation Studios was the location for a new advert for Rolls Royce cars.

Featuring our conservators, it highlighted the importance of using skilled professionals when caring for important objects. This advert will be aired worldwide.





HERITAGE LEARNING LANCASHIRE

We are a multi award winning cultural learning and education organisation, providing learning programmes for the Primary, Secondary, Further, and Higher Education sectors. Delivered within Museums, Libraries, Archives and as outreach into various learning and education establishments. The team also provide family learning, teacher training/professional development, bespoke projects, consultancy, and a range of public programme events.

“The children had the best time and are still talking now about the Anglo Saxon that came to visit. They have asked for more of these sessions, so we will book more in the future.” Teacher

“The Historical Enquiry CPD, has been the best teacher training programme my staff have engaged in.

The information was delivered via expert knowledge, humour, mastery and a deep understanding of the needs of teachers and pupils. Simply first class.” Teacher

In 2022 – 23

Our range of Niche Academy online tutorials have had over **2,000** engagements during the last twelve months, our Twitter profile continues to go from strength to strength, and we now have **719** followers and have had over **113,000** tweet impressions in the last year.

We launched a brand-new Podcast called ‘Whole Lot of History’. The Loans Service is trialling a new pick-up and drop-off service with great success and hopes to expand on this in 2023-24. To meet the increase in demand we have developed new boxes on World War II, Transport, 20th Century Toys, the Shang Dynasty, Wartime Rationing and HMS Titanic. The team also delivered a range of cultural, heritage and music projects including - The Lancashire Schools Storytelling Festival, Magic Fest and Folk in Schools, reaching over **10,000** pupils.



LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES

Lancashire Archives and Local History collects and preserves the County's unique collections of archives, making them available for exploring personal, family and community history.

In 2022 – 23

We launched our new Lancashire History Magazine, 'Archives', hosted a family event, 'The Great Exhibition!' and created new exhibition spaces with displays, including 'The Amazing Mr Mercer' and 'Preston Guild 1922'.

We delivered **25** school sessions to **970** pupils and supplied digital collections resources to **185** schools; and welcomed **57** volunteers who gave **2,500** hours to supporting the service.

We launched the National Lottery Heritage Fund supported 'Change Minds' project with the Lancashire Recover College, and we worked with The National Archives and Hyndburn Park Primary School to deliver the '20s Streets' Project.

We managed the transfer of **400** boxes of Harris Library collections. We secured the purchase of the Preservica digital preservation solution, and through a **£35,000** grant from the Friends of Lancashire Archives (FLA) we were able to purchase state-of-the-art digitisation equipment. Two new posts were created to lead on developing the Local History offer and Local Studies Collections, and we accepted **154** new collections, created **14,644** new public catalogue records and funded a new Collections Assistant post through the FLA.





LANCASHIRE SCHOOL LIBRARY SERVICE

Lancashire School Library Service offers a complete range of reading and library services to primary, special, academy and independent schools as well as to early years settings.

In 2022 – 23

We have issued **89,886** books to primary, special and nursery schools, and **14,853** pupils were engaged in our reading and learning activities. Our workshop offer to schools was updated and enhanced with seasonal story time sessions for Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

We introduced Teacher forums to gain feedback and to generate ideas for developing the School Library Service offers, and we worked in partnership with several schools in the Preston area to target levels of low literacy, which was supported by Peters Social Value Fund.

We were able to welcome visitors once again to the School Library Service and these included students from local universities, schools and other organisations.

We provided a 5-month work experience placement for a young person as part of the “Project Search” supported internship scheme.

Our new BookBus was introduced into service and visits each subscribing school annually, offering a unique reader experience for both teachers and pupils to select stock for their school libraries and classrooms.



“Thank you so much for another very successful visit to our school. We love to see you to choose our new books!”

Teacher – following a ‘Book Bus’ visit

“We have had many children asking if we can get the books for our school library. The sessions really promoted reading for pleasure.” Teacher – following a SLS Workshop



LANCASHIRE MUSIC SERVICE

Lancashire Music Service provides tuition for young people to play a musical instrument or sing. We have a wide range of bands, orchestras and workshops, to further develop pupils' musical skills and performance opportunities to showcase their talents. Teachers within schools can also access a comprehensive range of support and training from the service.

In 2022 – 23

Over the past year **94%** of schools have engaged with Lancashire Music Service. A particular strength has been the whole class digital offer to engage Secondary Schools via our new Digital Audio Workstation, YuStudio.

Over **11,277** hours of digitally supported teaching and **5,871** new students were provided with access to online learning. Teachers across **451** schools amassed **21,132** hours of vocal support throughout the year to ensure the quality of vocal work remained high. The Lancaster and District Schools Singing Festival saw the return of live workshops with visits to **11** local schools culminating in **15** schools performing in **2** concerts. Performance highlights include, HONK Street Band at the UEFA Women's Euros, Lancashire Youth Brass Band Tour to the Isle of Man, a joint concert with the Orchestras, Concert Band and new Inspire groups, and the Folk Group performing at the Gaia exhibition at Lancaster Priory.





LANCASHIRE OUTDOOR EDUCATION SERVICE

Our approach at Lancashire Outdoor Education is to use the outdoors to learn about ourselves, others, and the environment. We want people to try new things outside their comfort zone and explore their potential, making lifelong memories. We offer a broad range of outdoor experiences, primarily to schools but also for youth and uniformed groups, families, and corporate groups.

In 2022 – 23

Lancashire Outdoor Education has prioritised efficiency and improved quality of delivery and the customer experience. Achievements include a **97%** satisfaction against our **7** brand promises encompassing activities, accommodation, and core business offer. **282** schools came to our centres as part of their year, engaging in an outdoor experience.

This represents a **27%** increase on the previous year, furthering our reach and impact as a contribution towards young people's education across Lancashire. Accommodation was occupied for **15,795** bed nights across **221** school groups. This is an increase of **6%** on 2021-22.



CENTRAL SUPPORT TEAMS

The Information Development team works across Cultural Services to develop and deliver digital services, provide access to reliable information, and develop the workforce.

Working with internal and external partners the team supports the development of multi-media resources and training material.

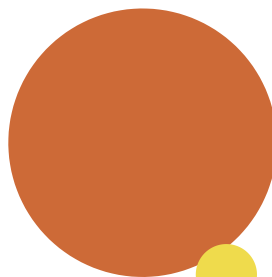
In 2022-23

We have co-ordinated and supported the migration of library staff logins to comply with Information Governance policies and completed an audit and review of staff PCs in libraries.

We developed and introduced online payments via the library user account in November 2022 (over **1,500** payments made by end of March 2023) and have worked with Digital Services to write a full statement of requirements for a new corporate event ticketing and marketing system.

We have developed a more coherent STEM offer using bespoke packages for all ages, and working with the Cultural Development team, we are developing this offer for the summer reading activities.

In partnership with Good Things Foundation, we launched the National Databank offer through libraries. We developed a more efficient process for working with Lancashire Adult Learning to host courses in libraries and museums and have supported the library apprentices with their end-point assessments. We contributed to the Education, Culture and Skills Communication review.



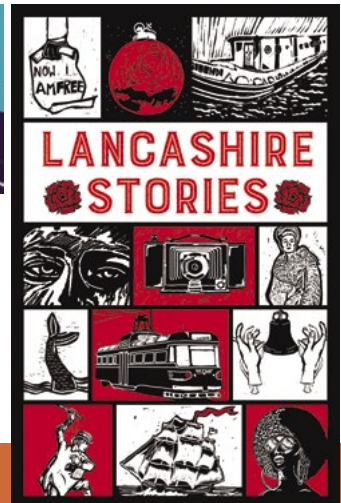


The Cultural Development team supports Cultural Services and the wider cultural sector to offer dynamic programmes engaging residents in high quality cultural, health and reading activities. We work in partnership with strategic sector stakeholders including Arts Council England and the Reading Agency.

In 2022-23

We developed new opportunities to support Lancashire residents to access inclusive cultural experiences such as Lancashire Stories, Lancashire Choir of the Year and Crowdfund Lancashire. We worked with refugees and asylum seekers to develop awareness of library offers. Our partnership with Active Lancashire secured more activity sessions into libraries to support physical and mental wellbeing. New reading development programmes included a successful “Planet Savers” children’s summer reading scheme and the introduction of Winter Reads. Lancashire Stories launched on Lancashire Day with commissioned short stories supporting adult reading.

The Lancashire Book of the Year award, promoting young adult fiction, crowned the winner Cynthia Murphy during a “Meet the Author” event at UCLan, attended by **300** young people. Our partnership with Arts Lancashire supported organisations with training to prepare for Arts Council England’s National Portfolio applications. 3 new organisations were added to the National Portfolio with regular funding for three years. In October we held a conference to support and thank our Friends of Cultural Services attended by **80** delegates. The development and introduction of Crowdfund Lancashire has enabled communities to raise funds for community projects with additional funding from Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.



The Library Resources team works with library managers, frontline staff, and suppliers to provide a wide range of printed books, eBooks, audio books and online resources for the people of Lancashire to enjoy. We also support the wider service to deliver operational plans through advice and training, we manage library requests and book groups and provide the music and drama lending collection.

In 2022 – 23

We have introduced the new Comics Plus service and the PressReader app, seeing use of online newspapers dramatically increase. We developed our eBook and eAudio catalogue resulting in **1,063,870** combined issues and **9,436** new members during the year. We have worked with staff at Skelmersdale Library to develop reserve collections to provide Lancashire Library members with the broadest possible range of titles.

We purchased non-English language books including Pashto, Farsi and Ukrainian languages to help support refugee communities and those arriving in Lancashire as part of resettlement programmes. Working with development colleagues and staff at Morecambe Library, we launched the Ask for a Book online service, enabling staff to develop customer relationships through providing personalised reading suggestions. We have worked with colleagues in Preston City Council and Lancashire Archives service to manage the decant and storage of The Harris Library collections in support of The Harris – Your Place project. Our music and drama service co-delivered a “Make Music Day” event with frontline colleagues to include a live performance and musical instrument making activity for children.





We have three Business Support teams within Cultural Services, these are the Cultural Services HQ, the Outdoor Education team, and the Music Service team. The work we do underpins the activities of all Cultural Services teams and supports the delivery of our Arts Council England commitments.

In 2022 – 23

We have supported around **700** staff, **250** teachers and freelancers in delivering outstanding cultural education, experiences and initiatives across Lancashire.

The teams have embraced new systems and embedded them into their working practices to support our Cultural Services' colleagues, our customers and suppliers.



SPOTLIGHT PROJECTS 2022 - 23

Archives Schools programme: History Is Here

At Lancashire Archives and Local History we want to enrich local history teaching and learning in Lancashire's schools by providing access to digital copies of documents from the collections at the Archives that relate to the places children call home. Our 'History Is Here' programme is designed to engage pupils, teachers and the whole school community with archival records that offer a local perspective, making history more personal and more relevant for children. Through our digital platform and via supported bespoke school visits to Lancashire Archives, we provide thousands of young people with access to millions of historic maps, documents, photographs and resources. **752** pupils engaged with 'History Is Here' at Lancashire Archives or in school. **180** schools signed up to the 'You Are Here' digital resource, with **308** individual members with access.



"This is incredible - thank you so much. I will be planning this over the Christmas holidays and I am really excited to teach this unit." St Mary and St Andrew's Catholic Primary School, Barton

"Thank you for allowing us to visit you yesterday and for showing us the treasures of the Lancashire Archives. The pupils enjoyed the experience very much." Corpus Christi Catholic High School, Preston



Book Awards (Lancashire School Library Service)

A successful launch of the Fantastic Book Awards (FBA) took place in September. We were joined by Cressida Cowell, Children's Laureate from 2019 – 2022, who shared information about her life-changing libraries flagship project and inspired many audience members to think about the importance of school libraries. **175** primary schools participated in the 18th year of this award, which aims to encourage children aged 9 –11 years to read for pleasure. 2022-23 also included a new look for the FBA logo and publicity.

This year's Brilliant Book Award was launched by Rob Biddulph who is an award-winning author and illustrator, and we were delighted to have him launch the BBA. The Brilliant Book Award aims to nurture the love of reading, whilst celebrating recently published stories for children aged 6-7 years. The award involved thousands of children from across **112** primary schools.

Throughout the spring term children were encouraged to have lots of fun, sharing stories and voting for their favourite book to win a Brilliant Book Award.



All schools taking part in Fantastic Book Awards and the Brilliant Book Award have been given exclusive access to Niche Academy and have made good use of the videos, creative activities, quizzes and information to download with **7154** views.

“Children have shown great enthusiasm and delight when reading and sharing the FBA titles. It has been fantastic to be able to meet and discuss a range of novels.” Teacher – on titles from the Fantastic Book Awards

Bringing the library to your door

Library staff have partnered with Lancashire County Council Communications Service and Lancashire Volunteer Partnership to produce promotional material for the Home Library Service. This included meeting, interviewing and filming Home Library Service volunteers from Burnley Library to produce a short film which has been used on social media, and can be viewed on the Lancashire County Council website in the 'News' section. Since the film has been promoted, we have taken on new customers and introduced new routes.

Carbon Literacy for Museums

Our Site Supervisor at Judges' Lodgings Museum was the first member of the museum service to complete Carbon Literacy Training. Judges Lodgings was then part of a pilot organised with Museums Development North West and the Carbon Literacy Project aimed to support six museums to train up a member of staff in Carbon Literacy and to take action to reduce our carbon footprint. This led to the development of a specific museums' toolkit for training museum staff and volunteers.

A Green Team set up at the museum successfully applied to the Sustainable Improvement Grant Fund for **£1000** to support a series of actions at the museum, including; a hot bin in the garden for food waste from staff, a pop-up tearoom and school packed lunches and the use of LED light bulbs. Bike racks have been installed near the museum to encourage cycling by staff, volunteers and visitors. Since 2021 a further **44** people in the service have now been trained and are identifying actions to reduce the environmental impact of the service. We have undertaken a travel survey of staff and commissioned travel plans for visitors and staff to our sites in East Lancashire and Lancaster with the support of the Planning and Environment team.





Crowdfund Lancashire

The Cultural Development team worked with colleagues across LCC to create a new annual funding opportunity to improve access to culture and sport and contribute to wellbeing across the county. Having researched appropriate funding models nationally, LCC adopted a civic crowdfunding model to enable communities to fundraise for projects important to local people and which might not come to fruition with conventional funding models. Crowdfund Lancashire was launched in December 2022 with community projects able to crowdfund for local initiatives that support culture or sport in their area of Lancashire.

Projects could also pitch/apply for funds of up to **£20,000** from the County Council's designated fund, the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund. Following the launch in December, we ran presentations, seminars and online workshops with groups from across the county with over **800** people attending.

We worked with district councils, council colleagues and with multiple Lancashire wide partnerships to consult and develop the criteria, as well as promote the fund to all community groups, organisations, town and parish councils, businesses and individuals across the county. To be eligible projects must be not for profit and demonstrate broad community support.

The first round closed on 1st February 2023 with over **58** projects fundraising on the Crowdfund Lancashire platform. Each project has up to **3** months to gain a groundswell of community support through donations as small as **£2** to their campaign. Round 2 of Crowdfund Lancashire will launch in May 2023, with a later round in the Autumn.



Friends Groups supporting Libraries, Archives and Museums

Over **80** members of Friends of Libraries, Archives and Museum groups, attended a very successful Friends' Annual Conference in October 2022 at County Hall, with over **17** different groups being represented. The day included a tour of the County Hall Chambers, a chance to meet a selection of councillors, and the opportunity for Friends' members to meet one another to share ideas and learn about new funding opportunities coming up. Several Friends' groups were successful in securing a range of funding last year, meaning libraries were able to provide a range of ongoing programmes of health and wellbeing sessions, for example seated exercise, Yoga, Boccia, Baby Yoga as well as activities for families and children. Another success story of last year, the Friends of Lancashire Archives supported the Archives with grants totalling over **£70,000**, covering new digitisation equipment and staff project posts.



Hope Streets, Culture Hack and @LancsYouthCulture

Hope Streets is a National Lottery Heritage Fund /Curious Minds programme aimed at creating a robust youth connection with museums and heritage.

The Heritage Learning Team have worked with around **18** young people across two sites, Queen Street Mill and The Judges' Lodgings Museum on this programme. The first group have created a new digital tour of Queen Street Mill, and the second group have re-designed a public space at The Judges' Lodgings. The programme will continue under the new young people's collective offer brought together as @LancsYouthCulture. This new focus for young people's offers within Cultural Services will also include Culture Hacks (young volunteers in libraries, museums and archives), as well as Archives Young Creators and young people involved in Lancashire Book of the Year.



Lancashire Conservation Studios Heritage Learning Programme

The Conservation and Collections Team have set up a new style of specialist practical training in museum skills, and it is the only programme of its kind in England. Directed at hard-to-reach groups and young adults, it provides a hands-on opportunity to experience the many aspects of Museum work from understanding the importance of collection documentation through to training in the care of wooden panelling, silverware, and stonework. Importantly it is supported by real life experience in a workplace, as well as hints and tips on getting a job in the heritage sector.

Two groups benefited from this programme: “Kickstarters”, young people 18-24 not in employment, and Rochdale residents. **66%** of our “Kickstarters” now have employment in a heritage setting and **2** have gone onto further education. One is now an archivist for Norman Foster & Partners Global Architectural Studio, and completing our programme was a key element in getting the job.

Working with Rochdale Development Agency the second programme was only for the people of Rochdale, we asked for no qualifications, only enthusiasm. Of the **16** individuals who started, **90%** completed and received certificates, **4** have applied for heritage jobs or third level training. Others continue as volunteers working with conservators, or as guides and ambassadors of Rochdale’s rich history. Some of the programme trainees also had the opportunity to work on the wooden panelling in the County Mess at County Hall.

“At the start of the course, I had minimal knowledge about conservation and the heritage sector; I believe I have gained immensely from the support and training provided. I now have practical experience within conservation, and confident for applying for heritage focused roles”. Participant



Lancashire Choir of the Year

New for 2022 “Lancashire Choir of the Year”, aims to showcase singing talent in Lancashire and celebrate the joy of singing in a choir. The Cultural Development Team steered this project working collaboratively with LCC Cultural Services, Communications and Web Service colleagues to get the competition up and running. Open to any Lancashire based choir (including Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen), choirs submitted a video of themselves performing to enter the competition. We loved watching the fantastic videos and the joy of singing in a choir shone through. A judging panel made up of professional singers/choral directors and the Leader of Lancashire County Council shortlisted **6** choirs to go through to perform at the live final in November at the Charter Theatre in Preston. The evening was a high quality event, with the judges having the difficult task of selecting the winning choir and runners up.

A **700** capacity audience watched on as the results were revealed and prizes presented, including the ‘People’s Choice’ which had over **3,000** on-line votes for Lancaster Royal Grammar School Choir. This year’s winners were Rossendale Male Voice Choir who gave an outstanding performance.

“LCOY was a really pleasing event to be a part of. It was great to work with colleagues across Cultural Services and highlighted the teamwork and creativity that drives our service.” Cultural Service staff member

“The Lancashire Choir of the Year Competition was a hugely positive experience personally and professionally and is a welcome innovation which will encourage development, participation and growth of choirs in Lancashire and beyond in the future.” Finalist choir member

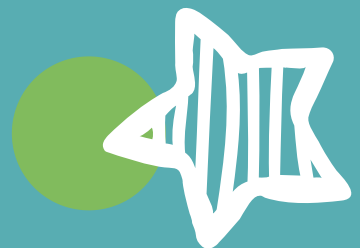




Lancashire Schools Storytelling Festival and Magic Fest

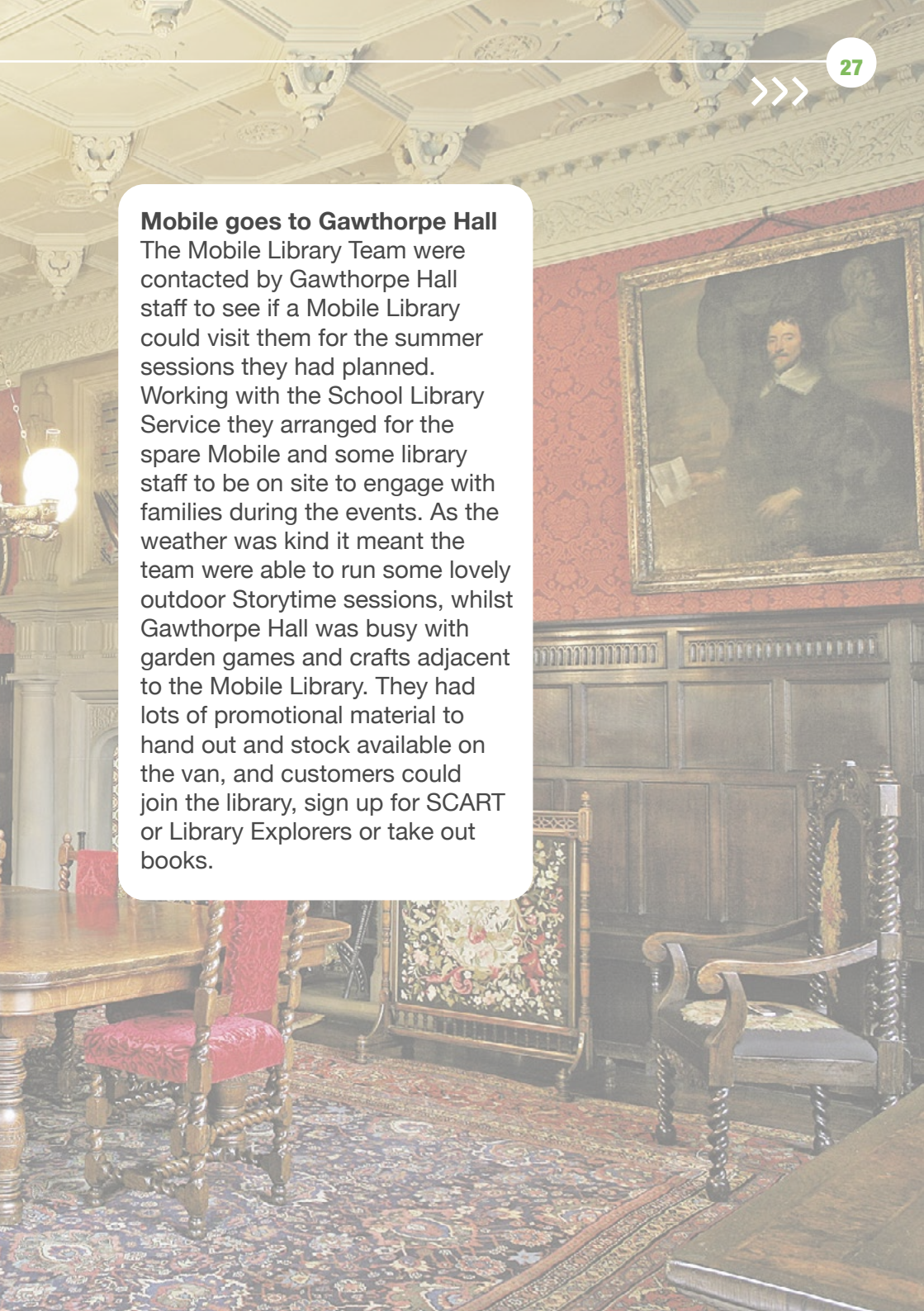
Lancashire Schools Storytelling, delivered by Heritage Learning Lancashire, is now in its 2nd year and is a collaborative performance project connecting oral storytelling, literacy and cultural heritage. Each March, Lancashire County Council primary schools can take part in the storytelling adventure culminating in an exciting finale during the festival fortnight. The Lancashire Schools Magic Fest aims to use the performance art of magic to advance and strengthen functional and soft skills - numeracy, literacy, communication, self-confidence, self-esteem, oral storytelling, local history, creativity, growth mindset, art, and design.

Pupils get the chance to connect with their local museums and heritage sites to create, design and build tricks/illusions inspired by their local heritage, collections and diverse communities. The project culminates in an exciting magical finale in June.



Mobile goes to Gawthorpe Hall

The Mobile Library Team were contacted by Gawthorpe Hall staff to see if a Mobile Library could visit them for the summer sessions they had planned. Working with the School Library Service they arranged for the spare Mobile and some library staff to be on site to engage with families during the events. As the weather was kind it meant the team were able to run some lovely outdoor Storytime sessions, whilst Gawthorpe Hall was busy with garden games and crafts adjacent to the Mobile Library. They had lots of promotional material to hand out and stock available on the van, and customers could join the library, sign up for SCART or Library Explorers or take out books.



Music Service Engagement

Our work with Specialist schools has seen whole classes involved, vocal teaching, workshops and online performances. **21** special schools accessed our digital platform and used it to provide access for young people to a range of core music learning activities. Our Winter Digital Big Sing offered training and bespoke resources with YouTube tutorials and guidance videos, culminating in an online event which had **461** views over the course of the project and continues to be available and used by schools. We ran 5 “instrument days” and “come and sing days” which engaged **300** young people. Following on from these we launched two new “Inspire” groups for strings and brass/woodwind/percussion.

These are aimed at beginners and run alongside our County Ensembles, bringing opportunities for peer learning and youth leadership.

Our Amplify Youth Voice group commissioned online content from young creatives and staged four events to share the findings of their survey of **400** young people on their experience of music education in Lancashire. ‘Revolution: Changing The Tune Of Music Education’ took place at Burnley Youth Theatre in November, bringing together young people and representatives from the music education sector to launch the new online content.





Prison Reading Groups

The Prison Reading Group (PRG) charity help set up, fund and facilitate Reading Groups in prisons. We deliver the Reading Groups in our libraries and work with PRG who provide us with the reading material to use in our groups. This year two of our prison library staff were invited to attend the 'Reading in Prison' Day by PRG, one staff member was a speaker on the panel discussing challenges and possibilities of promoting books and reading in prisons. Another member of staff won an award for 'Outstanding Feedback'. This partnership has led on to us starting a new family project with PRG; 'Raising Readers'. This project offers parents the chance to choose a book from a display in the library to be sent home to their child. We provide copies for both child and parent which can be enjoyed together on the phone or on a visit. The scheme has been successful in the libraries providing it and has had positive feedback.

What's next...

Cultural Services have committed to offering shadowing opportunities as part of a succession planning programme and will be reviewing our key performance indicators. Using the information gathered for this report we will be looking to identify gaps and how we continue to make our services accessible, inclusive and relevant for all Lancashire's communities. We would like to thank our customers, councillors, partners, and colleagues who have supported Cultural Services in 2022-23.





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